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14. ABSTRACT The paper examines the relationship between the Russian Federation and Japan, particularly territorial dispute over Northern Territories (the South Kurile islands). Unresolved territorial dispute is the largest obstacle between the two countries to conclude a peace treaty and fully normalize bilateral relations. Also, the purpose of the paper is to analyze Russo - Japanese relations and identify possible solutions to the dispute.					
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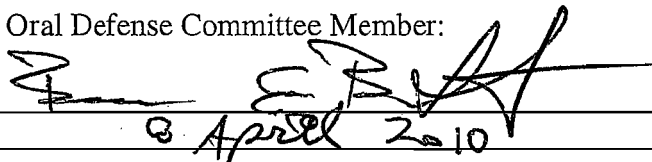
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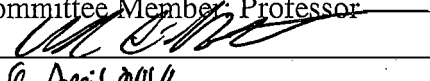
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Preface

This study traces the evolution of Russo-Japanese transnational relations, which have been always full of controversies and misunderstandings. The main issue between Russia and Japan is the territorial problem. Unresolved territorial dispute over Northern Territories/South Kurile Islands is the largest obstacle between two countries to concluding peace treaty and fully normalize bilateral relations. The purpose of this study is to analyze Russo-Japanese relations, particularly looking at political, military and economic dimensions throughout the history of countries' relations. Resolving the dispute would allow Russia and Japan not only enhance the quality of the bilateral cooperation but to increase security and ensure balance of power in the region, specially with the coming on the scene new powers, such as China.

Executive summary

Title: Russo-Japanese territorial dispute

Author: Lt Vladyslav Kravchenko

Thesis: More than half of the century has already past since the end of World War II, but the territorial dispute between Russia and Japan has not been resolved and a peace treaty has not been agreed upon. In this paper, based on my research, I will give the analysis of the relations as well as to try to find answers to questions: Why are the Northern Territories important for both sides? What are possible solutions to resolve the territorial dispute?

Discussion: Russo-Japanese relations have been evolving since the first official document was signed between two countries (Treaty of Shimoda, 1855) to current negotiations between governments about the ownership of Sakhalin Island and Northern Territories. Territorial dispute is the main obstacle to concluding the peace treaty between two countries and ultimately to establish friendly, economically beneficial relations between neighbors. Since 1855, there have been many treaties and agreements signed by the countries, which must be fully analyzed in order to understand the overall picture of the dispute and draw possible solution on the problem.

Conclusion: With the coming up new, more constructive politicians in Russia and Japan the dispute can be solved. Two governments should reevaluate bilateral relations in the prism of the new ideology; stop to consider territorial problem as an obstacle in improvement of relations and start to focus on more important international issues by development new economic and political programs, which would help to solve many internal problems in both countries.

Introduction

If to take a look on the map of Eastern Russia, between Kamchatka and Japan, there is a chain of islands: the Kurile archipelago. To be more precise, the Kurile Islands consist of the Big Kurile Range and the Small Kurile Range. The Big Kurile Range separates the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean; this range consists of 30 islands, which are different in size. To the West of the Kurile Islands there is a relatively big Island of Sakhalin (Karafuto). Sakhalin Island and Kurile archipelago are currently under Russian jurisdiction, although the southernmost four Kurile Islands, also known as Japanese Northern Territories or the Southern Kurile Islands in Russia (Kunashiri, Etorofu, Shikotan, Habomai group) are still claimed by Japan. Since 1955, after the USSR and Japan signed a Joint Declaration in 1956, negotiation between these two countries has been conducted.¹ The Declaration formally ended the state of war between the Soviet Union and Japan. By signing this document, diplomatic relations and most of outstanding issues between countries were resolved. A formal peace treaty, however, was not established. It was postponed for indefinite time until resolution of the territorial dispute.

More than half of the century has already passed since 1956, but the dispute has not been resolved and a peace treaty has not been agreed upon. Before 1991, the Russian government refused to recognize the existence of the territorial dispute. The territorial problem with Japan for the first time was articulated by the Russian President in Joint Russo-Japanese Statement, signed by both sides in Tokyo in the end of 1991. It was a new stage in resolving the Russo-Japanese territorial dispute. In order to understand the problem, it is important to analyze relations between the two countries in economic,

political, and military arenas, since the beginning of the 18th century, when Russo-Japanese relations was established. In this paper I will analyze the relations and try to find answers to the following questions: Why are the Northern Territories important for both sides? What are possible solutions to resolve the dispute?

Economic, strategic, and Symbolic meaning of the Disputed Islands

Economic importance

The Southern Kurile Islands have very rich vegetation. It includes alder thickets and dwarf Siberian pine. Spruce, fir and broad leaf forests of yew, oak and mulberry, as well as bamboo thickets are also very common on the Islands. Some types of flora on the Islands are very rare. Some of them are used in medicine, some in music instruments and furniture production. Kurile's fauna sustains great variety of different types of birds and animals, such as bear, fox, mink and others. Rich islands' flora and fauna make the Southern Kurile Islands very attractive for Russian and Japanese national economy.²

The biggest economic value of the islands lies in the maritime area. The Northern Territories exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is blessed with maritime resources. It is considered one of the world's largest fishing grounds. The maritime territory also has exploitable deposits of titanium, nickel, chromium, vanadium, and niobium. The islands themselves also have some mineral resources, but due the physical geography of the islands and poor infrastructure, these resources would be difficult to exploit.³ Nevertheless, further developments of the islands and great marine resources make the Northern Territories economically very important for Russia and Japan.

Strategic importance

During the Cold War era, the Russian South Kurile Islands played an important strategic role for the Soviet Union. First of all, the Islands were militarized and used as the means of projecting influence in Asia-Pacific region. Secondly, the Sea of Okhotsk along with the Barents Sea, served as two bastions, protecting Soviet submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) submarines, thus helping to guarantee Soviet second strike nuclear capabilities.⁴

Geographically it is important to possess the Kurile Islands for both sides, because it would ensure the control of routes from the Sea of Okhotsk to the Pacific Ocean.

Symbolic importance

In addition to economic and strategic meaning for both countries, it appears that the Northern Territories have symbolic importance for Japan and Russia. The Japanese believe that the Soviet Union occupation of the four islands forces the Japanese to remember the “pitiful defeat” during the Second World War.⁵ In fact, the Soviet declaration of war against Japan on August 9, 1945 was a violation of the 1941 Neutrality Pact, established between Japan and the Soviet Union. The USSR commenced troops in August and final occupation of the four disputed islands concluded on September 5, 1945. For three full days, after Japanese formal surrender, Soviet’s troops continued to attack and to take prisoners on the territory of the Kurile Islands.⁶ Moreover, shortly after the war the Russian leader Josef Stalin annexed the South Kurile Islands to the territory

of the USSR. The Soviet's attack, along with the USA's atomic bombing, are two events that left Japanese feeling victimized.

The South Kurile Islands also have symbolic meaning for Russia. In fact, the name *Kurile* originates from the name of the aboriginal Ainu, meaning "man", which was given by Russian Cossacks in the end of the 18th century. Ainu were the islands' original inhabitants. Peter the First found out about existence of the Islands in 1701-1707, and in 1719 the islands were given the name "Kurile's land" and plotted on the Semen Remezov's (Russian navigator) map. Therefore, from the Russian point of view, the South Kurile Islands have significant importance for the Russian history.

Background to the dispute

The Japanese claim to the Northern Territories is deeply rooted in the belief about unjust occupation and legitimate claim of four islands. In order to understand the core of the dispute, a historical and a legal basis of the problem needs to be examined.

Russo-Japanese relations before the First World War

Many historians have tried to determine who settled the South Kurile Islands first. In other words, who has the right of the "first discovery" and the "first exploitation" of the Kurile Islands? Some Russian historians claim that four Kurile Islands as well as Sakhalin Island were discovered by Russian navigators in the second part of the 17th century. Moreover, in Russia, the first map, with clearly outlined islands on it, was issued in 1745 along with official orders in the 18th century, where the Kurile Islands were the part of the Russian Empire. Japanese government, in turn, claims that the right of the

“first exploitation” belongs to Japan. Indeed, Japan is located very close to the South Kurile Islands and therefore, the Japanese claim seems very legitimate. However, it is worth mentioning, that Japan was an isolationist country from 1639 to the middle of the 19th Century during Edo period. According to Japan’s rules at that time, Japanese ships were strictly forbidden to leave for foreign countries. No Japanese people were permitted to go abroad; otherwise they had to be executed. Moreover, if any Japanese citizens returned from overseas after residing there, they had to be put to death. Also all sea ports were closed for trade with other countries.⁷ That is why Russians had more freedom to investigate outskirt territories of the Russian Empire. Though, now it is hard to prove for sure so called the rights of the “first discovery” and the “first exploitation.” The Kurile Islands were discovered almost at the same time, by the Russians from the North and the Japanese from the South, therefore the distinct border between lands of investigation very hard to identify.⁸

In 1855, the first official negotiations between the Russian Empire and Japan took place. Trade and diplomatic relations became subjects of official talks on the high levels of government. The same year (February 7, 1855) the Treaty of Shimoda (The Treaty of Commerce, Navigation, and Delimitation) was signed. One of the agreements of the Treaty was the establishment of national borders between two Empires. Commodore Putyatin, the representative from Russian Empire by signing the Treaty had agreed that

...the boundaries between Russia and Japan will pass between the islands of Etorofu (Iturup) and Uruppu (Urup). The whole island of Etorofu belongs to Japan and the whole island of Uruppu and the other Kuril Islands to the North constitute possessions of Russia. As regards the island Karafuto (Sakhalin), it remains unpartitioned between Russia and Japan, as has been the case up to this time.⁹

In the middle of the 19th Century, Alexander the Second (the ruler of the Russian Empire) took the course of his government's policy of influence to the West of Russia and to the middle of Asia. Unidentified national borders between Russia and Japan in Sakhalin Island caused new official talks between countries. The Japanese proposed to establish a new national border along the 50th parallel, but Russians insisted on the border along 48th parallel. Twenty years later, the result of Russo-Japanese negotiations was the conclusion of Saint Petersburg Treaty in May 7, 1875. According to the Treaty, Japan gave up its claims to Sakhalin Island in exchange to all Kurile Islands.¹⁰ Thus, all of the Kurile Islands became part of Japanese territory, which were later successfully used by Japan as important strategic points during Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905 and World War II. The Treaty of Saint Petersburg, however, did not put an end to conflicting ambitions in the area. Tokyo did not want to accept the loss of Sakhalin, while Russia's government kept planning to return the Kurile Islands back to the Russian Empire.¹¹

At the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century big capitalist countries began growing economically, culturally, and militarily. Japan was not an exception. New reforms of 1870-1890 led to social and political developments within the country. Because of the strong economy, Japan was able to make significant investments to the armament industry. A small domestic market and shortage of domestic natural resources helped Japan to expand its political influence on the Far Eastern region. As the result of Japanese policy, the first conflict between Japan and Russia happened on the Korean Peninsula, which led to the Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895. After defeating the Chinese Army, the Shimonoseki Treaty of April 17, 1895 was signed, according to which, Japan gained Formosa (Taiwan) and the Liaotung Peninsular with the city of Port

Arthur. The Sino-Japanese War had caused clashes between Russia and Japan in Korea and in South Manchuria. Both parties needed to expand the spheres of influence. Supported by Germany and France, Russia intervention, followed Shimonoseki Treaty, forced Japan to surrender its title to Liaotung.¹²

Meanwhile, in 1895 the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation was signed between Russia and Japan. It was a new step in improving the bilateral relationship. The Treaty cancelled the full Treaty of Shimoda, signed in 1855 and confirmed the legitimacy of the Saint Petersburg Treaty in 1875.¹³

In 1896, the Russian Empire established a trust relationship with China. Russia built the Eastern Chinese railroad in Manchuria, which the Russian Government used as a line of communication between eastern provinces of Russian Empire and Middle Asia. Moreover, in 1898 Russia made an agreement with China, according to which, Russia rents Liaotung Peninsular with the Naval Port Arthur on it for 25 years. The proliferation of the Russian influence in the region was deteriorating relations between two Empires. By that time, the tension between Russia and Japan became worse, which was followed by a conflict situation; it all ultimately led to the state of war between countries.

In 1904, after disrupting diplomatic relations with Russia, Japan entered into the war against the Russian Empire. Russia had experienced a domestic revolutionary crisis before the war, and thus was poorly prepared economically and militarily for the conflict with Japan. Japan, on the contrary, had strong infrastructure and a larger, more-prepared Army. Moreover, Great Britain and the USA were actively supporting Japan during the war of 1904.¹⁴

On January 27, 1904 the Japanese Naval strike on Port Arthur meant the beginning of the first military conflict between Russia and Japan. In May 1905, after one year of ground and naval fights Japan defeated Russian troops. For both sides the war was very hard. Russia and Japan were economically and militarily exhausted toward the end of the war. Nevertheless, Japan was victorious and definitely had a right to claim the “prize” for the war. In Portsmouth (USA) President Theodor Roosevelt hosted the negotiations between Russia and Japan. After two difficult decades of discussions the Peace Treaty of Portsmouth was concluded on September 5, 1905. According to the Treaty, victorious Japan gained title to Liaotung peninsula and half of Sakhalin Island to the South of the 50th parallel.¹⁵ The Treaty of Portsmouth gave Japan the dominant position in South Manchuria and in Korea. The Russian Empire, by giving up the South Sakhalin Island, completely lost the exit to the Pacific Ocean and moreover put at stake the line of communication between Vladivostok, Kamchatka, and Chukotka.

In short, the situation around South Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands, after the war of 1904-1905 had developed as follows: The south portion of Sakhalin Island was under Japanese jurisdiction, the northern part under Russian Empire; all Kurile Islands remained under Japanese rule, since the Treaty of Saint Petersburg of 1875 was annulled by the Treaty of Portsmouth.¹⁶

Relationship between Russia and Japan between World War I and World War II.

Russo-Japanese borders, established by the Treaty of Portsmouth remained legally unchanged until the end of World War II. Japan made several attempts to expand the territories during 1918-1925, when Bolshevik Revolution and Civil War in Russia brought chaos to Siberia and Far Eastern provinces of the collapsed Russian Empire. In 1918 Japan, using protection of Japanese citizens and support of anti-Bolshevik movements as the pretext, occupied a part of Maritime Russia and Amur Territories with the Port of Vladivostok and city of Khabarovsk. Two years later, being attracted by recently discovered coal and oil fields, Japan occupied the Northern part of Sakhalin Island with some sectors of Chita province. However, no legal annexation of Russian territories took place during Japanese intervention.¹⁷

In 1922 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was created, which served the ultimate normalization of the bilateral relations between Japan and government of the Communist Soviet Union. The improvement of relations resulted in gradual evacuation of Japanese Forces from Chita, Khabarovsk and Vladivostok in 1922 and from Northern Sakhalin in 1925. During the first phase of the Second World War, Japan made attempts to purchase the northern part of Sakhalin Island from the Soviet Union, but with no success.¹⁸

After the Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905 the flow of Japanese people to the Northern Territories constantly grew. Because of the Japanese investments, the economic boom in South Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands occurred. Meanwhile, World War I brought economic crisis to Europe. The Baltic fishing industry was devastated; therefore, the maritime fishing grounds in the vicinity of the Kurile Islands and their infrastructure

received a new wave of development. From 1920 to 1930 on Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands, new fish-processing factories were built. In the Okhotsk Sea zone modern fish cannery plants grew up. Aside from developments in fishing industry new farms and nurseries were organized on the Islands. Farming and fishery on islands required more and more man power. New working places became attractive for people, which ultimately led to the population growth on the islands.

World War II and its aftermath

After the conclusion of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty in 1905 and after the revolution crisis in Russia, the Soviet regime was established. The Japanese civilian government was replaced on militarized and, therefore, the process of militarization of the country began. In Japan the tendency toward the seizure of Soviet territories was steadily increasing.¹⁹ Since 1931, the Japanese government intensely started to strengthen the North of Japan. In 1936 Japanese press openly recognized the fact of the armament of Northern Territories.²⁰ Moreover, in 1930 Japan had successfully improved the relations with Fascist Germany. As the result, in 1936, the Anticomintern pact was signed between Japan and Germany, dedicated first of all against the Soviet Union.²¹

Since the beginning of World War II, the USSR had increased its political and military power. Japan, having observed the enhanced power of the Soviet Armed Forces, on April 1941 signed the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact with the USSR, designed with the intent of weakening the vigilance of the Soviet Union in the Far East.²² Formally, the Pact itself had to remain in effect until the spring of 1946 and prescribed "...to maintain peaceful and friendly relations between them and mutually respect the territorial integrity

and inviolability...”.²³ In reality, the Neutrality Pact was not conducted properly by both sides. The rapacious fishing in waters of the USSR continued from the side of Japan. American firm “Sinclair” obtained from Japan the right of oil production in Northern Sakhalin Island, which formally belonged to the Soviet Union at that time.²⁴ Japanese Fleet selectively detained Soviet vessels in the Kurile straits, and the Japanese government concentrated a large number of armed forces near the USSR’s border.

During World War II, Japan actively helped Germany in the war, supplying both military and food production. The cases of crossing Soviet borders by Japanese aircraft increased during the first part of the war.²⁵ Stalin, in turn, was conducting negotiation with the Allies about the possible military action against Japan and, moreover, was providing assistance to American pilots in their attacks in Tokyo from Kamchatka bases.²⁶ Analyzing these actions by USSR and Japan before and during the war, it is necessary to conclude that both sides were violating the Neutrality Pact, signed in 1941.

In the Teheran conference, which took place from November 28 to December 1, 1943, the President of the USA Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed the USSR to participate in the war against Japan. Soviet delegation in assessment of this proposal proceeded from the fact that in the period of World War II, Japan violated articles I and II of the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact, prescribed to respect territorial integrity and inviolability, to keep neutrality in the case of war with other countries. This helped Stalin give the positive answer to the proposal of Allies delegations. Thus, the USSR agreed in Teheran, six months after the war in Europe finished, entering the war against Japan. In addition, President Roosevelt began to talk about the transfer of the Kurile Islands to the Soviet Union if they entered the war with Japan in the Far East.²⁷

At the Yalta Conference, on February 1945, the “agreement about the Far East” was signed. According to the document the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan on the side of the Allies 2-3 months after the capitulation of Germany and end the war in Europe. As compensation, Russian losses to Japan which resulted from the Russo-Japanese war 1904-1905 would be restored. These included Southern Sakhalin, adjacent islands, and the Kurile Islands.²⁸ It is important to highlight, that the Kurile Islands did not pass to the Soviet Union on the category of recovery and they could not be conversely returned, but they were only transferred as the military trophy.²⁹

For the purpose of realization of Stalin’s promises in the Yalta Conference, the Soviet Union began to move Russian troops from the European front to the Far Eastern front. During the Russian campaign in the Far East three major operations were successfully conducted: Manchurian, South Sakhalin, and Kurile. The Manchurian operation had decisive importance in the war against Japan.

On August 14, 1945 the government of Japan realized that the Japanese resistance was senseless, especially after the entering into war with the USSR and the United State’s employment an atomic weapon. Therefore, Japan made a decision to capitulate. On September 2, 1945, on board of the American battleship “Missouri”, the Act of Japanese capitulation was signed.

Stalin, after World War II, being scared of losses in the Kurile Islands and Sakhalin during Japanese order of capitulation, issued the Supreme Soviet Order about the annexation of South Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands to the territory of the USSR. All geographical names on the islands were renamed. On January 2, 1947, the separate Sakhalin region was established. Thus the islands became officially part of the USSR, but

the corresponding legal international order has never appeared. The Russian population began to grow on the islands. From 1947 to 1950 the number of Russian people increased from 3,500 to 15,000-20,000. In order to hold people on the islands, the Soviet government created the system of "Northern privileges" (extra charge to pension, additional holidays).³⁰

After World War II, Japan in a couple of years had restored and began to claim occupied South Sakhalin Island and the Kurile Islands back from the USSR. The Japanese argument was based on the agreements in the Portsmouth Peace Treaty. Because of the growing Japanese dissatisfaction with the post war distribution of territories, in 1951 the peaceful conference was carried out in San Francisco, resulting in the signing of the San-Francisco Peace Treaty. This was the last large international document that directly concerned the Second World War Japan officially rejected all rights and claims of the South Sakhalin Island and the Kurile Islands. Article II of the Treaty stated: "Japan renounces all rights, title and claim to the Kurile Islands and to that portion of Sakhalin and islands adjacent to it over which Japan acquired sovereignty as a consequence of the Treaty of Portsmouth of 5 September 1905".³¹ Meanwhile, the document did not indicated as to whose benefit Japan rejected the territories. This was one of the reasons why Moscow did not sign the document. At the same time the agreement did not identify geographical boundaries of the Kurile Islands. This created even more problems. The Russian side claimed that islands of Kunashiri, Etorofu, Shikotan, and Habomai belong to South Kurile Islands (Northern Territories). To the contrary, Japan did not consider the Northern Territories as part of the Kurile Islands, which was alluded in the San-Francisco Peace Treaty. Russian and Japanese perceptions

of the Northern Territories meant that the Peace Treaty made the territorial question between countries even more complicated. Also, it is worth mentioning, that Article 25 of the Treaty specified that the Treaty does not give any rights and advantages to the state if it is not signed.³² From the study of the San-Francisco Peace Treaty it is clear, that sovereignty of Japan formally restored but at the same time allowed the possibility of establishment or retaining foreign Armed Forces on the territory of the Kurile Islands and the Southern part of Sakhalin Island. Thus, the situation over disputed territories could be described as almost blind.

In the middle of 1950s in Japan a new government came to the power. The Prime-Minister of Japan announced that Japan should continue to restore relationship with the Soviet Union and to seek the way to conclude the peace and to enhance diplomatic and commercial relations. Talks between the two countries at high levels occurred in London in June 1955. The Japanese delegation presented the draft of the agreement, which claimed that South Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands should be transferred to Japan. Nikita Khrushchev, the leader of the Soviet Union, and Soviet diplomats in his response stated: "... Habomai and Shikotan lie so closely to Japan that we must take into account the interests of Japan...".³³ Khrushchev considered that transfer of two islands would speed up the signing the Peace Treaty between the USSR and Japan. Japanese, however, did not want to or just could not (under the pressure of the USA) agree on the Soviet proposal.³⁴ As a result, without having found a satisfactory agreement, in 1956 negotiations were interrupted for the indeterminate period.

Further, in 1956, the normalization of bilateral relations between the USSR and Japan was achieved during negotiations in Moscow. On October 19, 1956 the Joint

Soviet-Japanese Declaration was concluded. In the text of the Declaration it was stated that the state of war between Japan and the USSR ceased; peace and neighboring relations were restored. Article 9 of the Declaration included the Soviet promise to return Shikotan and Habomai at the moment when Japan becomes ready to sign the Peace Treaty.³⁵

The Cold War era had involved not only the USSR and the USA but other European and Asian countries. In 1960, the USA and Japan concluded the military treaty-Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan. Considering the Treaty as a threat to the USSR, the Soviet Union sent an official letter to the Japanese government. The letter outlined that the Soviet Union, taking into consideration that the USA-Japan military treaty oriented against the USSR and China, could not allow other foreign military forces to expand to the Northern Territories, therefore the islands of Shikotan and Habomai would be transferred to Japan in the case of absence of all foreign military forces on islands and signing the Peace Treaty between Japan and the USSR.³⁶ From the USSR prospective, these islands could become military bases not only for Japan but also for the USA. This would weaken the Far eastern boundaries of the USSR.

Between October 1956 and the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, there were several attempts to resolve the territorial dispute. A certain breakthrough in the Soviet-Japanese relationship seemed to be on the way on 16-19 of April 1991, when the USSR's President Mikhail Gorbachev paid a visit to Japan. During talks between Gorbachev and Japanese Prime-minister Kaifu, the USSR for the first time after the World War II, officially acknowledged the existence of the territorial problem between two countries.

To confirm it officially, the Joint Soviet-Japanese Statement was released. The document indicated that the thorough and deep negotiations on the entire complex of questions were carried out, including the problem of the Northern Territories. Furthermore, it specified the disputed territories: Shikotan, Etorofu, Kunashiri, and Habomai. By the Soviet initiative, visa-free entrance on the South Kurile Islands was established for Japanese citizens. However, nothing was mentioned regarding the destiny of Shikotan and Habomai islands. It happened to be the final Soviet-Japanese official meeting, and President Gorbachev was the first and the last Soviet leader who ever visited Japan. On December 8, 1991 the USSR ceased to exist.

Modern Era. Latest developments

After the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Federation became a successor of the Soviet Union and therefore inherited the unresolved problems of Soviet-Japanese interrelations. Boris Yeltsin, the first Russian President, had formed the document, in which basic approaches to debatable questions were outlined as the five-stage plan of the solution of the territorial problem between Japan and Russia. The Plan included the following points:

1. The first stage, in 1990-1991, the Soviet side confirmed the existence of territorial problems between Japan and Russia.
2. The second stage, in 3-5 years, covered establishment the zone of free enterprise on the South Kurile Islands with the privilege conditions for the business for the Japanese side.

3. During the third stage, the demilitarization of the South Kurile Islands had to be complete.
4. The fourth fell on the beginning of 2000s and lead to the signing the Peace Treaty between two sides.
5. The contradictory fifth point stated that following politicians, not connected with the prejudice of the present, should continue to seek the non-standard solution of the problem, which satisfies both sides.³⁷

The document, from one side, recognized the territorial dispute but, from another side, the final solution would be put off to the hands of the following generation of politicians.

Further Russo-Japanese relations can be described as a period with mutual visits of Japanese and Russian representatives for the purpose of further development of all spheres of interrelations.

On July 18, 1993 there was an official meeting between President Yeltsin and Prime-Minister of Japan Morihiro Hosokawa in Tokyo. The Tokyo Declaration was developed and approved by both sides. It did not contain significant solutions on the territorial dispute, but, in fact, the Declaration became the only one basic and mutually acknowledged document, that regulated Russo-Japanese relations.

In 1993, the complicated internal political situation in Russia along with the military conflict in Chechnya pushed the problems between the countries to the background. Russo-Japanese mutual efforts for regulating the territorial problems started deteriorate and became more complicated.

In the meantime, despite the protests of the Russian government since 1990, illegal mass fishing in the territorial waters of the South Kurile Islands continued to take

place, which caused extensive damage to Russia. In 1993, Moscow insisted Tokyo stop poaching, otherwise more decisive measures would be taken. The Japanese answer did not follow. The rapacious fishing continued. In 1994 the Russian government sent a proposal to Japan about the possibility of fishing in territorial waters of the South Kurile Islands on the condition of financial compensation. The Japanese answer was negative. Later, in 1995, Japan, during Russo-Japanese negotiations about fishing issues, agreed to pay compensation, proposing to carry out this problem on the level of public organizations.

The development of the relationship between Russia and Japan did not cease also with the new President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. During the first summit of 2001 in Irkutsk (Russia) and the meeting of 2003 at high levels, Putin and Prime-Minister of Japan Yoshiro Mori came to the agreement and developed the Japan-Russia Action Plan, which was cited in the Japan-Soviet Joint Declaration of 1956, the Tokyo Declaration of 1993, and Irkutsk Statement of 2001 as the foundation for the future Peace Treaty negotiations.³⁸ Besides the creation of new Joint Documents and promises from both sides to make more efforts to resolve the problem, Putin's era brought the countries to the next level of bilateral relations. The Leaders of two sides started to see the problem and possible solution in the broad context. Their views mean that the development of political, economic and home security issues had been put on the same line with the territorial problem, and some changes are already visible. For example the following programs have been established between Russia and Japan: non-visa visits (Japanese citizens and Russian residents on the Islands are able to engage in mutual visits without passports and visas), humanitarian assistance for residents (Japanese government extends

assistance to the Russian residents living on the islands), cooperation in the field of disaster prevention in the area of the Northern Territories.³⁹

Possible gains for Russia if the territorial dispute is resolved

1. Japan could significantly increase financial assistance to Russia.
2. Japan probable increase of investments in Russian Far Eastern region and Siberia, especially in the exploit of the natural resources.
3. Probable security alliance with Japan, mainly against possible future threat from China and North Korea.
4. Resolving the dispute would significantly decrease costly Russian military presence at the Russo-Japanese frontier.

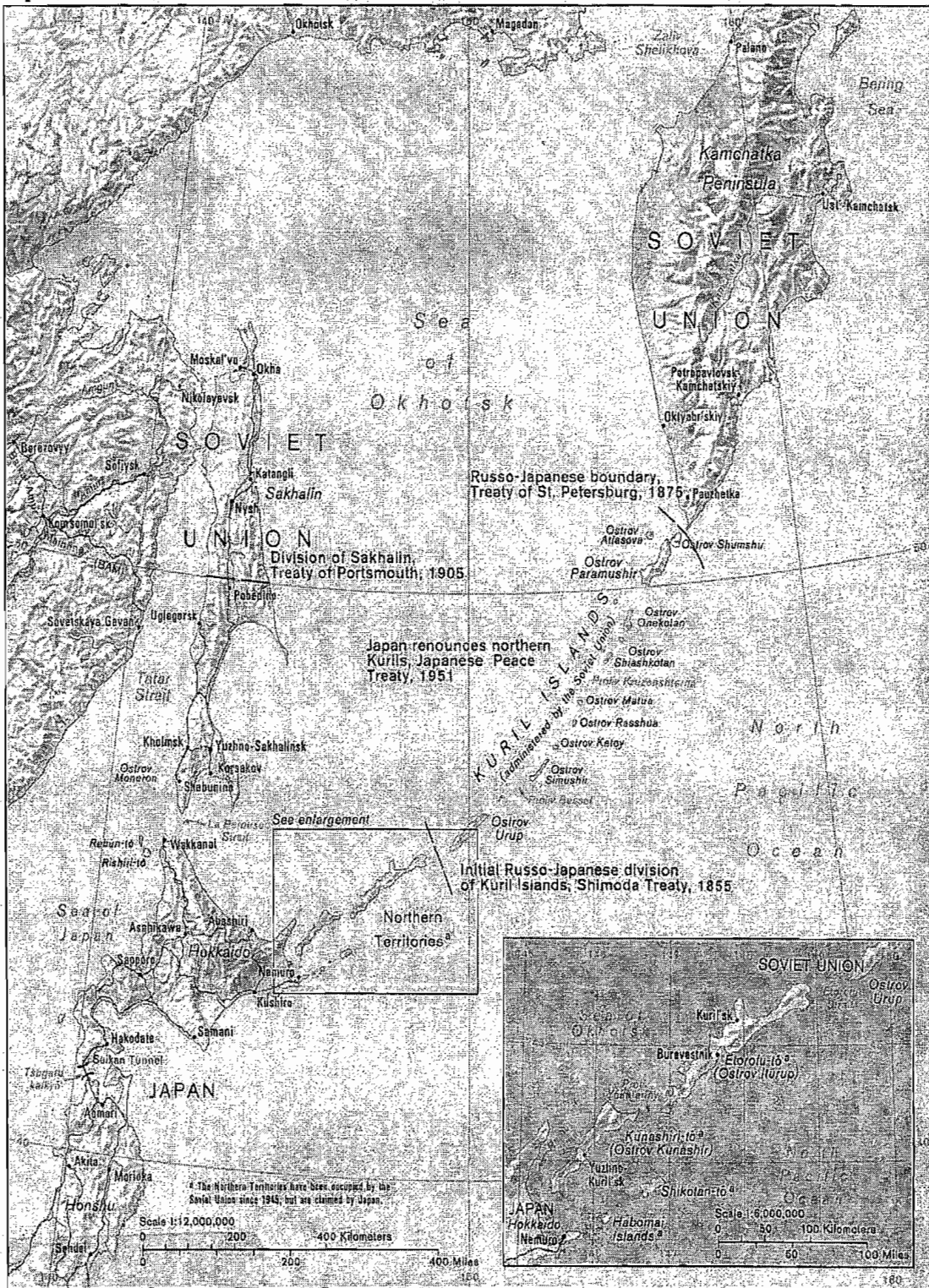
Possible gains for Japan if the territorial dispute is resolved

1. Japanese finally obtain their, what in Japan believed, “historical borders”.
2. Resolved territorial issues will give permission to increase Japanese investments to the Russian Far East and explore Russian natural resources, which would boost Japanese economy.
3. Relatively small disputed islands can solve demographic problem in already overpopulated Japan.
4. Decrease presence of military forces at Russo-Japanese frontier⁴⁰.

Conclusion

The territorial dispute between Russia and Japan over the Northern Territories is the “obstacle” for both countries to build bilateral relations. Negotiations between governments over the destiny of the Northern Territories have been going on since the end of the Second World War. Many historical facts and legal documents have been analyzed and taken into consideration in order to find out which country has the right to possess the islands. Currently there is no clear solution to the problem. If Russia was to return the disputed territories to Japan, then it would show the weakness from the Russian side. Furthermore, the aid of the International Court of Justice cannot be the solution of the territorial problem, since, whatever the solution would be, one of the sides would “lose”. Therefore, the peace agreement must be achieved based on Russian and Japanese efforts. Historical factors, natural climatic similarities, public opinion of both countries, and the inhabitants’ opinion should be taken into consideration in resolving the dispute. I think Russia and Japan can improve their bilateral relations. In order to achieve that, both governments should focus their efforts on resolving not just the territorial issues, but also on trying to develop a new ideology of relations in different spheres of life based on the mutual cooperation.

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Appendix B

List of major official documents and meetings used in the paper, which have had impact
on Russo-Japanese relations

#	Document/meeting	Date	Place	Page number for reference
1	Treaty of Shimoda (The Treaty of Commerce, Navigation, and Delimitation)	7 February 1855	City of Shimoda (Japan)	9
2	Saint Petersburg Treaty	7 May 1875	Saint Petersburg (Russian Empire)	10
3	Shimonoseki Treaty	17 April 1895	China	11
5	Peace Treaty of Portsmouth	5 September 1905	Portsmouth Naval Shipyard near Portsmouth (United States of America)	12
6	Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact	13 April 1941	Moscow (USSR)	14
7	Agreement about the Far East	4–11 February 1945	Yalta (Ukraine, USSR)	16
8	San-Francisco Peace Treaty	8 September 1951	San-Francisco (United States of America)	17
9	Meeting between Nikita Khrushchev and Prime-Minister of Japan	June 1955	London (UK)	18
10	Joint Soviet-Japanese Declaration	19 October 1956	Moscow (USSR)	19
11	Joint Soviet-Japanese Statement	16-19 April 1991	Tokyo (Japan)	19-20
12	Meeting of President Yeltsin and Prime-Minister of Japan Morihiro Hosokawa	18 July 1993	Tokyo (Japan)	21
13	Japan-Russia Action Plan	30 May 2003	Tokyo (Japan)	22

Endnotes:

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Joint Compendium of Documents on the History of Territorial Issue between Japan and Russia, document of September 1992, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/russia/territory/edition92/preface.html>

² Brad Williams. *Resolving the Russo-Japanese territorial dispute: Hokkaido-Sakhalin relations*. (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 21.

³ Williams, 21

⁴ Williams , 22.

⁵ Williams , 22.

⁶ Williams , 23.

⁷ Sara Watts. World History. *The Seclusion of Japan*.
http://www.wfu.edu/~watts/w03_Japancl.html.

⁸ Учиться.ру, “Кризис в отношениях России и Японии”. Learn.ru, “The crisis in Russo-Japanese relations”, <http://tolearn.ru/Mejdunarodnyeotnosheniya/33114-krizisvotnoscheniyahrossiiiyaponii>

⁹ Treaty of Shimoda. Article 2.

¹⁰ Saint Petersburg Treaty. Article 2.

¹¹ Andrew Anderson, “South Kuriles/Northern Territories”, A Stumbling-block in Russia-Japan Relations, 2001,
<http://www.conflicts.rem33.com/images/Asia%20Pacific/NORTHERN%20TERRITO%20Text.htm>.

- ¹² Encyclopedia.com. http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Treaty_of_Simonoseki.aspx
- ¹³ Russian national philosophies. <http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/1895ruja.html>
- ¹⁴ Bill Gordon, "Explanations of Japan's Imperialistic Expansion, 1894-1910," posted December 2003, <http://wgordon.web.wesleyan.edu/papers/imperialism.htm>
- ¹⁵ Peace Treaty of Portsmouth.
- ¹⁶ Peace Treaty of Portsmouth.
- ¹⁷ Prokarelia. Andrew Anderson. "South Kuriles/Northern Territories", A Stumbling-block in Russia-Japan Relations, posted on March 10, 2005, http://www.prokarelia.net/en/?x=artikkeli&article_id=600&author=62.
- ¹⁸ Prokarelia. Andrew Anderson.
- ¹⁹ Kutakov, *History of Soviet-Japanese Diplomatic Relations*, (Institute of Foreign Relations Publishing House, Moscow, 1962), 11.
- ²⁰ O. Y. Bondarenko, *Unknown Kuriles. Serious thoughts about status of the Kurile Islands*, 40
- ²¹ Anticomintern pact.
- ²² O. Y. Bondarenko, *Unknown Kuriles. Serious thoughts about status of the Kurile Islands*, 79.
- ²³ Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact.

- ²⁴ I. V. Shishkin, *Glory on Far Eastern ranges*, 25.
- ²⁵ Kutakov, *History of Soviet-Japanese Diplomatic Relations*, (Institute of Foreign Relations Publishing House, Moscow, 1962), 181-183.
- ²⁶ O. Y. Bondarenko, *Unknown Kuriles. Serious thoughts about status of the Kurile Islands*, 79.
- ²⁷ Bondarenko, 85.
- ²⁸ US history encyclopedia. <http://www.answers.com/topic/yalta-conference>.
- ²⁹ Bondarenko, 88.
- ³⁰ Bondarenko, 106-107.
- ³¹ San-Francisco Peace Treaty.
- ³² San-Francisco Peace Treaty, Article 25.
- ³³ Русский Архипелаг. Серг  й Тихвинский. "Послевоенная нормализация отношений с Японией." Russian Archipelago. Serhiy Tihvinskiy, "Normalization of relationship with Japan after World War II", 2000, http://www.archipelag.ru/ru_mir/ostrov-rus/far-east/normalization/
- ³⁴ Russian Archipelago. Serhiy Tihvinskiy, http://www.archipelag.ru/ru_mir/ostrov-rus/far-east/normalization/
- ³⁵ Joint Soviet-Japanese Declaration.
- ³⁶ Embassy of Japan in Russia. <http://www.embjapan.ru/normal.phtml>.
- ³⁷ Brad Williams,. *Russia and the Northern Territories*. Russian and Euro-Asian Bulletin", Vol. 7, No.8, August 1998. <http://www.cerc.unimelb.edu.au/bulletin/aug98.htm>

³⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan,

<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/russia/territory/pamphlet.pdf>.

³⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan,

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⁴⁰ Prokarelia. Andrew Anderson. "South Kuriles/Northern Territories", A Stumbling-block in Russia-Japan Relations, posted on March 10, 2005,

http://www.prokarelia.net/en/?x=artikkeli&article_id=600&author=62.

⁴¹ Ampontan. Japan from the inside out, "Japan's Northern Territories: Still simmering after 60 years," Posted by Ampontan February 9, 2007,

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